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Review

# InsideAPHIS



## Animal Care

Safeguarding the Welfare  
of America's Animals

## Cover Story

# Animal Care Takes Center Stage



APHIS PHOTO BY ANN CZAPIEWSKI

Acting Deputy Administrator for Animal Care Ron DeHaven speaks during a public meeting at APHIS headquarters in Riverdale, MD. Also attending (left to right) John Coakley from Organizational and Professional Development, Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Michael Dunn, and Acting APHIS Administrator Craig Reed.

by Jamie Ambrosi, Legislative and Public Affairs, Riverdale, MD

The scene is tense. A crowd of 250 animal rights advocates, industry representatives, and interested members of the public pack into the conference center at the APHIS Headquarters building in Riverdale, MD.

Cordial but cautious, they all come to the May 12 Animal Care (AC) public meeting for one reason: to learn what APHIS has been doing to improve enforcement of the Animal Welfare Act (AWA). Outside, the rain pounds against the windows. Inside, the questions spring from the floor.

"What has USDA been doing to improve the oversight of commercial dog dealers?" asks one individual. "What are USDA's plans regarding the testing of circus elephants for tuberculosis?" asks another.

Ron DeHaven, AC's Acting Deputy Administrator, has anticipated these questions for weeks. In fact, as head of the program that enforces the AWA, he's been hoping they would be asked. The questions provide him the opportunity to showcase the program's efforts. Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs Michael V. Dunn, who sits by DeHaven's

side with Acting APHIS Administrator Craig Reed, strongly supports these efforts.

"I'm glad you asked," begins DeHaven. "Let me take a few minutes to recap some of the many changes our program has undergone in the past 2 years."

### A United Effort

In April 1996, APHIS issued its strategic direction for the Animal Care program. The document painted the picture of a program with vast potential but in need of an overhaul. It also detailed the steps AC needed to take to improve. These included making better use of resources for enhanced program delivery and empowering, supporting, and developing employees.

From the start, the strategic direction had the backing of Dunn and other high-level Department officials. As Dunn notes, "We knew what needed to be accomplished, and we gave our full support to AC employees to get the job done."

Capitalizing on this support, AC wasted no time in putting the plan into action. The program established eight employee-based teams, each focusing on one or more of the

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## From the Cover

While putting the "Care" back in Animal Care, this program has a new outlook and has unveiled this art as part of its effort to safeguard America's animals.



plan's objectives. It also created an initiatives coordinator position to oversee the teams and ensure that the strategic direction moved forward.

"The strategic direction document was basically a mandate to reinvent the AC program," says Dick Watkins, AC's initiatives coordinator. "The strategic direction said, 'Don't be modest. Take risks and make major changes.'"

For the next several months, AC employees from California to the Carolinas descended on APHIS headquarters with the charge of revamping the way AC did business. The employees looked at everything from the way the program conducted inspections to ways to better educate stakeholders—such as licensees and animal rights activists—about the laws and regulations. The employees had numerous suggestions for improvements.

"At one point, I think we had more proposed changes than we had employees to carry them out," says DeHaven. "However, it was easy to identify the high-priority items."

## What to Change First?

"One of the first items we looked at changing was our inspection system for AWA licensees and registrants," says DeHaven. "We realized that with decreasing resources and increasing costs we would need to change our policy of inspecting all regulated facilities at the same frequency."

This concept first surfaced at AC's public meetings on the regulation of dog dealers in early 1996. But serious concerns remained. Any decrease in the frequency of inspections would be viewed by animal welfare organizations as making APHIS' AWA inspection system less stringent. And any new system had to be fair and equitable for all licensees and registrants.

To handle these thorny issues, AC knew it needed to establish an

inspection system that was both objective and impartial. The system must rate everybody using the same criteria. The result? AC's new risk-based inspection system (RBIS). This system uses several criteria, such as licensees' or registrants' past compliance history and types of animals being used (e.g., tigers versus gerbils), to determine risk and inspection frequencies for given facilities.

Still, implementing the plan wasn't easy. "It took us 2 years of hard work and headaches to make RBIS a reality," says Bob Gibbens, AC's Western Region Director and a member of the team that developed the system. "Some of our inspectors even had reservations at first, not to mention how it was viewed by those outside the agency."

However, in time, these concerns turned into confidence for the risk-based system. And, by the time it was officially launched in February of this year, the system was broadly supported both by AC employees and the program's stakeholders.

"Right now, we are seeing tremendous support for RBIS," says Watkins. "People are realizing that it is a fair and equitable way to do more with less. And, after all, isn't that what reinventing government is all about?"

## Less Frequent, but More Focused Inspections

To complement RBIS, AC also changed the focus of its inspections. "After 30 years of conducting as many inspections as possible, we began performing more in-depth inspections, particularly of those licensees and registrants who historically had compliance problems," says DeHaven.

"The result is a slight decrease in the overall number of inspections but a significant increase in the amount of time spent inspecting individual facilities. And that means more time to search for any problem areas."

## Carrot-and-Stick Approach

AC also modified its enforcement strategy. No longer does the program treat all alleged AWA violators the same. Under a new two-pronged strategy, AC and Investigative and Enforcement Services (IES) pursue innovative penalties for licensees and registrants who show an interest in improving the conditions for their animals. These penalties allow the individuals to invest all or part of their monetary sanctions in facility improvements.

At the same time, AC and IES have pursued stringent penalties for licensees and registrants who do not improve the conditions for their animals. Such actions typically include significant monetary sanctions, such as a \$200,000 fine that was levied against a circus for the death of an elephant in the southwestern United States in August 1997.

"The idea is to get off the backs of those that are in compliance, work with those who want to improve, and get tough on the bad actors," DeHaven proclaims.

AC's numbers speak for themselves. During the past 2 years, more than \$1.8 million in fines have been assessed and nearly 50 licenses suspended, revoked, or disqualified. All the while, AC and IES have virtually eliminated the once insurmountable backlog of AWA cases in the legal pipeline.

## Provide Tools to Do the Job

But AC's efforts don't stop with the new plans for focus and enforcement. The program has also undertaken several initiatives to better equip its field personnel with the tools they need. For example, AC has provided its entire AC field force with laptop computers, allowing them to eventually produce electronic inspection reports that can be instantly transmitted to the AC regional offices.

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# International Partnerships Pay Off When Fighting Medflies

by Anna Cherry, Legislative and Public Affairs, Riverdale, MD

APHIS uses state-of-the-art technology to keep up with trends in agriculture, international trade, and other pertinent issues. All of our work enhances the ability of the United States to buy and sell agricultural products in the international marketplace and fortifies our abundant, safe, and diverse food supply. One of the most destructive threats to our agricultural resources is the Mediterranean fruit fly. The Medfly, or Moscamed in Spanish, attacks more than 250 species of fruit, nut, and vegetable crops.

This poster, seen here on the side of a common work truck, is one example of how participating countries of Moscamed work together. Posters are used as advertising to inform residents about Medflies and how governments are working hard to eliminate them from the western hemisphere.



APHIS PHOTO BY ANNA CHERRY

The Medfly deposits eggs under the skin of the fruit or vegetable. The maggots later hatch and feed there until the destroyed crop—maggots and all—falls onto the ground, and the flies develop into the next stage.

As a part of our efforts to safeguard agricultural resources, facilitate trade, and keep the destructive Medfly as far away from our borders as possible, APHIS contributes to the Moscamed Program in Guatemala. The United States, Mexico, and Guatemala are partners in this effort to control and eradicate the Mediterranean fruit fly in Guatemala. International Services (IS) provides support and guidance to this program.

"The Moscamed Program has great potential, and has lots of

good scientists and practitioners developing useful applications of data and technology to battle Medflies," said Isi Siddiqui, Deputy Assistant Secretary for USDA's Marketing and Regulatory Programs mission area.

Siddiqui and several other U.S. officials, including U.S. Ambassador to Guatemala Donald J. Planty and Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Deputy Administrator Al Elder, had an opportunity to tour several sites associated with the Moscamed Program earlier this year. "I was glad to have the

opportunity to see the operation and talk to the people in the field," Siddiqui said.

Primarily, the Moscamed Program helps reduce the potential for establishment of Medflies in the continental United States. By maintaining a barrier against this pest in Guatemala, APHIS ensures that U.S. exports are accepted into other Medfly-free countries such as Japan. Also, by working cooperatively with other countries like Mexico and Guatemala, we are able to develop comprehensive treatments and tools to use in the battle against the Medfly when there are emergency outbreaks in the United States.

"The United States benefits both by keeping the Medfly from being established close to its borders and

by the research and experience gained from this project," said John Stewart, IS director for the Moscamed Program. "The further away from our borders we keep this pest, the better our protection is."

"I was very impressed with the operations here and all of the people we have met. The trip was very educational," said Elder. "A lot of the work done in Guatemala is designed to help us develop alternatives to using the pesticide malathion." Malathion is used as an aerial spray and as ground treatment to fight off Medflies when they are first detected in an area. It is a pesticide that is very effective even when used in very diluted concentrations. However, PPQ is always looking for better and more environmentally friendly ways to combat the Medfly. So the search for other weapons to battle this pest has become even more important.

One highlight of the Guatemalan tour was a visit to Coatepeque, where, as part of the Moscamed Program, tests using applications of a photoactive dye, SureDye®, to combat Medflies are taking place. When Medflies ingest SureDye® and are then exposed to light, they experience a phototoxic reaction. In other words, regular daylight becomes deadly to them. This year's test began in December of 1997. Development is ongoing, but it is too early to tell if SureDye® will be an effective tool to use in aerial and ground treatment for Medflies. The results to date, however, are promising. In addition to Moscamed Program testing, data on environmental impacts had been sent to various laboratories for evaluation.

"One of the benefits with SureDye® is that it has already been approved by the Food and Drug Administration for use in human foods and other products, like Pepto-Bismol®" said Stewart. "One disadvantage of the dye is that it's red and leaves spots where it is used, although it is very water





APHIS PHOTO BY ANNA CHERRY

soluble. It has also been challenging and costly to procure."

"It will be interesting to examine the data and see how diluted we can make the dye and still have it be effective," said Elder. "Hopefully, there will be a way to minimize the spotting."

"We have been impressed with SureDye® so far," agricultural engineer and coordinator of Moscamed field operations Carlos Lira said. "We had to stop using malathion in treatments because it proved to be harmful to honeybees, and there are numerous beekeepers in this area." SureDye® can be harmful to bees if they ingest it, but it is specially mixed to be attractive to Medflies and no beekeepers have reported problems with their colonies. "Numerous evaluations have shown that the dye shouldn't be a problem for the bee industry," Lira added.

Before testing in Guatemala, APHIS had to complete an environmental impact assessment. This is required of Federal agencies taking actions like this abroad. However, each country is responsible for determining which pesticides can or cannot be used on their lands.

This pesticide operation, which Guatemala agreed to use, is high-tech all the way. Oscar Morales, an agricultural engineer for Moscamed, manages the satellite locking and tracking system (SATLOC) that determines where the airplanes are treating with SureDye®. "With the SATLOC system, we instantly know exactly where the plane is, where it was, and where it has applied the dye," Morales said. There is a high level of precision in each run, and helpful data can be downloaded directly from the planes that carry computers. "The maps and charts that are generated from this system are excellent," said operations coordinator Leonel Carrillo.

"Every aspect of this operation is professional and highly focused," Siddiqui said. "We stand to benefit from the data collected here and maybe even gain a new tool in the battle against the Medfly when an outbreak occurs in the United States." In addition to the SureDye® testing, a full-scale sterile insect release program is going on in Guatemala. There are several laboratories and even a sterile fruit fly rearing facility operating in the country. "International Services is pleased to be a



APHIS PHOTO BY ANN CZAPIEWSKI

**Left: Crews prepare for a SureDye® test application by pumping the red dye mixture into helicopters. Above: An adult Medfly, the pest that threatens crops of the United States and many Central and South American Countries.**

part of such an important and worthwhile program," said Farouk Hamdy, IS' Region IV director.

The tour of Moscamed and Guatemalan agricultural facilities helped bring about a higher level of understanding about agricultural issues like quarantines and export capabilities for all of the participants. "We were able to see for ourselves a program that sometimes seems a little abstract from Washington, DC," Siddiqui said. "It is so critical to be able to get into the field and talk about the work people are doing on a day-to-day basis," Elder said. "We all benefit from events like this one."

"For myself and all the people working in Guatemala, it was nice to have the chance to demonstrate our accomplishments and really have our colleagues listening," Stewart said. "I look forward to continuing the work here."

"Medflies are a destructive pest of agriculture everywhere, and the more we can do to successfully control and eradicate them, the better," Elder said. "All of the research and practice occurring here will help us battle this pest." ♦

# Inside Profile: Theresa Hohlfeld

by Katherine Hilton, Legislative and Public Affairs, Riverdale, MD

It has been said that "Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one's courage."

If that is true, life is certainly large for one APHIS employee who dedicates her leisure hours to an activity that requires enormous courage and compassion. After working for APHIS each day as chief of field operations for IS' Screwworm Eradication Program, Theresa Hohlfeld—with her golden retriever, Nugget, as her partner—participates in search and rescue missions.

While serving as an APHIS veterinary medical officer in New Mexico, Hohlfeld, who joined APHIS in 1992, sought an activity that combined her love of dogs, the outdoors, and people. She discovered a local search and rescue group and soon had a 6-week-old puppy to train. Nugget, now 4 years old, and Hohlfeld are an accomplished search and rescue team that has participated in nine rescue missions. Hohlfeld and Nugget are trained to help locate lost hikers, children, Alzheimer's patients who have wandered away from home, and, sometimes, bodies. The type of search being conducted and its location greatly affect the likelihood of finding a missing person alive. Hohlfeld has thus far located two missing people alive.

Although other animals are used for search and rescue missions, canines are the best suited for the work. A search dog has 44 times more olfactory sensory cells than a human. In addition, one-eighth of a dog's brain is dedicated to the sense of smell. With that amazing sensitivity, a dog can detect some odors as small as one part per trillion.

The primary rule in search and rescue work is "trust your dog," says Hohlfeld, because he is the best judge of what he smells. Search dogs can be trained in several types of rescue work: tracking, trailing, air scenting, and disaster relief. While Nugget has

some experience in several types of work, she is principally an air-scent tracking dog oriented to airborne human scent. When Hohlfeld and Nugget are called out on a mission, they work moving downwind through a specific search area. Based on the terrain and the kind of search they are working, Nugget typically begins off her leash, running free. Hohlfeld knows immediately when Nugget finds the scent because she turns in the direction of the scent, puts



APHIS PHOTO

**IS Veterinarian Theresa Hohlfeld and her rescue dog Nugget at their last assignment in Costa Rica.**

her nose in the air, and becomes very animated. Unlike many other rescue dog trainers, Hohlfeld does not use food as a reward for her dog. Instead, Nugget's reward for her efforts is some quality time playing with her favorite toy and Hohlfeld.

To focus all that ability, search and rescue dogs are tested and trained by their handlers in the areas of obedience, agility, tracking, searching, and retrieving. Establishing a strong bond between human and canine is critical because, more than other search and rescue endeavors, search dog teams often work on their own. Because such a team is

no better than its weakest link, the handler, too, must be fit, know basic human and canine first aid, be search-wise, and understand field survival and the necessary equipment.

Despite knowledge and training, rescue teams have to work hard not to become as lost as the person they are trying to find. Even experienced teams like Hohlfeld and Nugget have found themselves in dangerous situations that tested them both physically and mentally. The first Costa Rican search effort in which they participated was looking for a missing Peace Corps volunteer. After tracking her scent through part of a Costa Rican dry tropical rainforest, Hohlfeld and Nugget discovered that the woman had fallen from a waterfall and died. On another occasion, Hohlfeld and Nugget were assisting in a search for bodies believed to be in two cars that had plunged into a deep river bed. While isolated from the other searchers, Hohlfeld and Nugget found themselves in rapidly rising water with no clear escape route from the river bed. On that occasion, despite increasing fear, "I followed my dog," said Hohlfeld. "She knew just where to go." Experiences such as these help build a strong bond between partners that extends far beyond rescue work.

What drives Hohlfeld to undertake these often dangerous rescue missions? A very deeply felt desire to help people. That desire recently sent Hohlfeld and Nugget on a mission into Costa Rica's San Luis Valley. On Saturday, February 7, the U.S. Embassy in San Jose received word that an American woman doing volunteer work as a biologist had disappeared in the lush rainforest reserve of Monteverde, one of the most impenetrable areas of the country. As the Embassy's duty officer for the day, Hohlfeld took the call from the woman's worried parents who reported her missing, and quickly volunteered her services—and Nugget's—for the search.



The San Luis Valley is approximately 4 hours from San Jose. Nevertheless, after she finished work that day, Hohlfeld and Nugget sacrificed a good night's sleep to journey to the site that same evening, arriving at 1 a.m., ensuring that Hohlfeld would be there to meet with the searchers gathering at dawn the next morning. When the group formed at 5 a.m. Sunday, Hohlfeld heard reports that some individuals had seen the missing person leaving the area, that perpetrators of a nearby robbery had taken the woman as a hostage, and that the woman had been seen in various areas by different people. She quickly realized these scattered stories had seriously undermined the search effort. By then, the woman had been missing 4 days and could have been seriously hurt. They were losing valuable time.

Hohlfeld knew it was critical to widen the search area. As she was making her case for the expansion, the International Red Cross, believing all hope of finding the woman alive was lost, abandoned its search, leaving Hohlfeld and the local searchers to carry on. To increase their search capabilities—and raise morale—Hohlfeld used her Embassy contacts to secure the assistance of several experienced military specialists from Panama, two military helicopters accompanied by eight crewmen, and 30 Green Berets who were placed on standby. Intensifying the search and rallying the rescue parties, Hohlfeld convinced them to begin looking for the woman in a wider area, even though hope for finding her alive was fading.

Good news came on Monday morning when one local rescue team entered a new search zone and found the woman, who had fallen into a deep sink hole and was unable to get out. She had survived 6 days without food or water, wearing only a T-shirt and shorts to keep her warm. The

expanded search area that the lucky woman was found within was one recommended by Hohlfeld.

Although she and Nugget were not among the searchers who found the missing American in this case, Hohlfeld's presence during the mission was invaluable. She brought experienced people into the search process, she comforted frightened family members in the United States with frequent updates, and she alone convinced the local search and rescue group to continue looking when others were ready to abandon the effort.

Hohlfeld's supervisors in Costa Rica have been very supportive of her rescue work. "Human lives are on the line," explains her supervisor, Screwworm Eradication Program director H. Chris Hofmann.

"She is a model of a fully dedicated U.S. Government diplomat, representing her country 24 hours a day, 7 days a week," U.S. Ambassador to Costa Rica Thomas J. Dodd says of Hohlfeld. Dodd also recounts that military personnel involved in the search said that, had Hohlfeld herself been in the military, she would certainly have been a Green Beret or a Ranger. High praise indeed.

"No individual ever finds a lost person," says a modest Hohlfeld about the importance of teamwork and group effort in search and rescue work. Rescue workers and their canine teammates often work in less than hospitable weather through rough terrain. They work even when they are cold, sick, and exhausted. Hohlfeld explains the kind of dedication demonstrated by search and rescue teams, telling about a good friend in New Mexico. Though fighting cancer, this woman continued to participate in search and rescue missions



APHIS PHOTO

throughout chemotherapy. As she fought increasing pain, she turned to training search dogs, and did so until the end of her life. According to Hohlfeld, no matter the rescuer's situation "I know the person in trouble out there is worse off than I am."

Hohlfeld, who is scheduled to become co-director of the Exotic Animal Disease Commission in Mexico City, anticipates that she and Nugget will soon face new challenges. Trained search dogs are often called upon there to locate people in collapsed buildings in the aftermath of earthquakes and tremors that frequently shake Mexico City. Wherever Hohlfeld goes with Nugget, she takes her courage, compassion, and commitment to helping others, knowing she has a steadfast partner at her side. ♦



# We Brought Our Kids to Work and They Saw... Bugs!



APHIS PHOTO



APHIS PHOTO BY RUBEN RUIZ

(Above) In Pharr, TX, K.C. Fuentes, niece of PPQ Officer Martin Fuentes, views an insect under the microscope as Rebekah Ruiz, daughter of Public Awareness Officer Ruben Ruiz, awaits her turn. (Left) Also in Pharr, Sean Alanis, son of PPQ Supervisor Joe Alanis, discovers caterpillars in some vegetables.



APHIS PHOTO BY RUBEN RUIZ

(Above left and below) Children in Honolulu, HI, pour through the variety of plant pests intercepted at the port. In the above left photograph, Keenan (left) and Jamie Nonaka, children of PPQ Officer Howard Nonaka examine live specimens. Below, Jamie examines pinned insects from the port's collection with Casey Hara, son of PPQ Officer Craig Hara.



APHIS PHOTO



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AC also has consolidated several volumes of often conflicting and confusing policies into approximately 20 sensible and understandable ones. These policies are interpretations of the regulations and are used by field personnel when conducting inspections. By having one easily portable manual that is used by all field personnel, AC can ensure that the AWA is being interpreted the same way throughout the country. (As a side benefit, AC has made these policies available to stakeholders for the first time.)

In addition, AC has held two national training conferences for AC field personnel, the most recent of which took place in March of this year. As with the rewritten policies, the focus of these conferences was establishing uniform inspection procedures throughout the country.

"We want to make sure our inspectors are saying the same thing in Honolulu as they are in Houston and Hartford," says Jeanne Lorang, AC field inspector in the western region and a member of the team that helped to plan the national training conference. "Our policies and national training conferences are making this goal a reality."

As a final training piece to the puzzle of inspection consistency, AC will hold three training sessions later this year that pertain specifically to elephant care and handling. With all the public attention focused on these popular giants in recent years, AC recognizes the need to provide its inspectors with the best available knowledge on the animals' care. Through these three sessions, AC will train its field personnel who inspect elephants on what to look for and how to look for it.

## Reaching Out To Stakeholders

Still, all these changes would be unknown to the program's stake-

holders if they weren't communicated. "If a government program changes in Washington, and the people in Iowa don't know, what good is accomplished?" asks DeHaven. "We must tell our stakeholders where we are going and ask for their input."

AC has used a variety of means to achieve this end. In early 1997, the program undertook a massive survey of 3,700 licensees and registrants to measure customer satisfaction. The survey, part of AC's efforts to comply with the Government Performance and Results Act, helped the program establish baseline levels of service from which to improve. AC has used this valuable data to set goals for the future.

Around the same time the survey was given, AC also launched a multi-year public awareness campaign. This campaign is designed to raise awareness about AC and its numerous efforts to improve enforcement of the AWA, as well as the Horse Protection Act. Products from the campaign already include a full-color brochure on traveling safely with pets, a corporate-style annual report, and several other valuable informational products.

"One of the most important products," says Watkins, "has been the quarterly report we send to our stakeholders to keep them briefed on program developments. With all of our changes, we believe it is imperative to keep our customers in the loop with where we're going."

Another, more subtle communication enhancement was the creation of a new user-friendly inspection report. The new narrative format provides a list of any items that are not in compliance and a description of the citation. It also references the section of the AWA regulations under which the noncompliant item has been cited. All of this makes the reports much easier for people outside the agency to understand.



AC's Manny Adviento (left) conducts an in-depth inspection of a Sea World whale in San Diego, CA.

## The New AC Emerges

Through all these changes, what has emerged is a new Animal Care program. One dedicated to continuous improvement rather than the status quo, one based on performance-management not placating interests, and one committed to the spirit of reinventing government and the intent of the Government Performance and Results Act.

Nowhere has this been more evident than at the May 12 public meeting (yet another AC effort to communicate better with stakeholders). As DeHaven fields question after question from the probing audience, he reveals the numerous changes that the program has undergone during the past 2 years and comes one step closer to the real reason why AC has spent so many hours and dollars reinventing its operations.

"In essence, we had to put the 'care' back in 'Animal Care,'" says DeHaven. "We had to make it clear that, when we get involved, animals' lives improve. Our work is too critical to have people not understand that essential part of our job." ♦

# Y2K Status Update and Senior Managers' Meeting

by Janet Wintermute, Legislative and Public Affairs  
and APHIS Integrated Planning team member, Riverdale, MD

By now you've seen the headlines: solving the Year 2000 computer problem is costing billions of dollars worldwide. Besides covering the expenses attached to remediating software and hardware, businesses and government agencies also anticipate serious legal liability claims if the fixups are ineffective or tardy.

Here in APHIS, the Year 2000 strategy team—established by APHIS' Y2K executive sponsors, science advisor to the Administrator Sally McCammon and chief information officer Mike Gregoire—includes members of the APHIS Integrated Planning team (AIP) and employees from the Information Technology (IT) Coordinating Staff and Management and Budget. This strategy team has been meeting weekly to create a systematic approach to assessing the compliance status of our computer equipment, software, buildings, aircraft, lab equipment, vehicles, x-ray machines—in short, just about everything we use to get our jobs done around the world.

Don Walden and Jerome Patterson of Management and Budget report that employees have been submitting information for the surveys of our property and buildings, both owned and leased. Much of that material, they've found, is already Y2K compliant.

Aircraft surveys, however, reveal a big problem. The global positioning system (GPS), which uses satellite signals to enable our pest-control spray teams to navigate accurately, is not Year 2000 ready. The GPS manufacturers will not commit to fixing the problem until the satellite makers modify their signal. APHIS must hope the original suppliers can provide Y2K-compliant versions for us to buy in advance of the deadline at midnight, December 31, 1999.

On the systems front, the AIP has identified 20 mission-critical systems across all the line programs, and these 20 systems are scheduled to be Y2K ready well in advance of the deadline. Develop-

ers in APHIS' IT community have been working on that job nonstop for many months already (which explains why they could not do those special new programs or enhancements you've been asking for....). In addition, the AIP has authorized expenditure of Integrated Systems Application Project (ISAP) line-item funds for purchasing outside development expertise to remediate several mission-critical systems.

The AIP is also aware of better than 350 other systems deemed important, but not mission critical, that may need Year 2000 remediation. Some will undoubt-

edly be dropped; others will get their computer code rewritten to fix the year/date recognition problem; still others will be replaced by new off-the-shelf systems that are already built to handle the date 01/01/00 correctly. Each unit in APHIS will need to choose between retiring, fixing, or replacing these 350 systems.

## July 30 Managers' Meeting Scope and Employee Responsibilities

Every APHIS manager has Y2K responsibilities. To make sure

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## Texas Veterinarian Stops Screwworm



Quick response by Sheryl Proctor, a veterinarian in private practice in San Antonio, TX, stopped a potentially serious outbreak of screwworm in the United States. On March 10, Veterinary Services' Central Region Director Rube Harrington (left) and Texas Area Veterinarian in Charge Phil Pickerill presented Proctor with a commendation for her identification and quick reporting of the parasite.

Screwworms are a parasite of humans and animals that feeds on live tissue. "We've worked so hard

to eradicate this pest, that we treat any discovery like an emergency," said Pickerill. Screwworms were eradicated from the United States in 1982 and APHIS has supported eradication efforts from Mexico to Panama.

On November 19, 1997, a basset hound named Lady was imported from Panama to San Antonio via Atlanta and Columbia, SC. On November 21, the owners brought Lady to Proctor's clinic after they noticed the dog limping. Proctor discovered a wound that she suspected could have been invaded by screwworms and reported it to the Texas Animal Commission. The commission reported the incident to APHIS, and a team of experts was formed and actions taken to ensure any chances of infestation were eliminated. ❖



## Retirements

*Inside APHIS* would like to wish the best to those who retired from January through April of this year. Thanks for all your hard work.

Aucoin, H.	WS	Harrisburg, PA	01/98
Axe, Darcy	IS	Riverdale, MD	01/98
Birdsell, Sherilyn	VS	Des Moines, IA	02/98
Capino, Charlene	VS	Riverdale, MD	02/98
Clark, Peggy	VS	Ames, IA	02/98
Davis, Janet	PPQ	Phoenix, AZ	04/98
Davis, Richard	VS	New Market, TN	02/98
Gale, Bradley	PPQ	Houston, TX	03/98
Gustafson, Dea	PPQ	Lincoln, NE	03/98
Holston, Beatrice	MB	Riverdale, MD	03/98
Huff, Irwin	VS	Bismarck, ND	03/98
Kirby, Marshall	IS/PPQ	Riverdale, MD	01/98
Lewis, Bobby	PPQ	Gulfport, MS	01/98
Mariott, Barbara	WS	Columbia, MO	01/98
Martin, Richard	WS	Fort Stockton, TX	01/98
Neal, Albert	PPQ	New York, NY	03/98
Thomas, Nichole	VS	Riverdale, MD	02/98

## Deaths

*Inside APHIS* offers condolences to the families and coworkers of those who passed away this year.

Clark, Lawanna	WS	Mariposa, CA	03/98
Iijima, Clayton	PPQ	Inglewood, CA	04/98
Rothman, David	PPQ	Los Angeles, CA	04/98
Suzuki, Morley	PPQ	Inglewood, CA	04/98

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managers are aware of the business and legal ramifications of the problem. Acting Administrator Craig Reed will host a meeting on July 30 in the Conference Center in Riverdale. All senior managers in APHIS and our sister agencies in Marketing and Regulatory Programs are invited. (During the last week in July, the APHIS line programs are holding their own senior management team meetings at headquarters, so the players will be in the neighborhood.) Agricultural Marketing Service and Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyards Administration managers will join us to share information on how they are handling the Y2K situation.

Invited speakers include the Department's chief information officer, Anne Reed, and Assistant Secretary Mike Dunn. The Y2K strategy team will be represented by Sally McCammon, Mike Gregoire, and Y2K program manager Bill Cosgrove. They will offer a summary of where the agency

stands on scoping out and fixing the Year 2000 problem. A representative from the Office of the General Counsel will share information on APHIS potential legal liabilities should any systems fail. In addition, the strategy team and the AIP will present a "Y2K Report Card," sort of a status check on how each line program stands in terms of the fixup process for its own hardware and software.

In breakout sessions, attendees will discuss the status of legacy systems as well as the systems not supported by the agency's inhouse developers. Contingency planning for business functions in case of system failures will be critical as failures may occur due to circumstances beyond APHIS' control.

In July, look for a complete meeting agenda in APHIS Online, the biweekly electronic version of *Inside APHIS*. You can find APHIS Online on the APHIS Intranet ([http://inside.aphis.usda.gov/planning/aphis\\_online/](http://inside.aphis.usda.gov/planning/aphis_online/)). ♦

## *In Remembrance*

### Donald Luchsinger

Donald Luchsinger, 62, former Deputy Administrator of Veterinary Services (VS) and International Services (IS), died of cancer on June 12 outside of Minneapolis, MN.

Luchsinger retired from APHIS in June 1997 after 36 years of service with USDA. After moving from Deputy Administrator of VS to be Deputy Administrator of IS in July 1996, he served as Acting Associate Administrator for APHIS from January 1997 until his retirement in June 1997.

Luchsinger was Acting Deputy Administrator of VS from 1993 until his appointment to that position in August of 1995. Prior to that, he served VS as an Associate Deputy Administrator and director of the Operational Support Staff.

He started his career with APHIS in 1961 as a field veterinary medical officer in his home State of Minnesota, and later as a regional epidemiologist for the brucellosis and tuberculosis eradication campaigns. After heading up a section of the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, IA, he assumed leadership of all veterinary services and animal health programs in Minnesota. In 1984, he became chief of APHIS' foreign animal disease diagnostic laboratory at Plum Island, NY.

Luchsinger's was also a scientific advisor to the Pan American Health Organization in Kingston, Jamaica, and animal health advisor to the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Luchsinger received his Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine and Masters in Public Health from the University of Minnesota.

He is survived by his wife Judy of Burgess, VA, three sons, his mother, his sister, and two grandchildren. ♦

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